2000 Community IPM Grant
Final Report
Improving Diagnostic Skills through Regional Training Sessions.

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Objectives of the Project:

1. Improve disease diagnostic skills of Cooperative Extension Educators, Master Gardeners, and community members by conducting regional educational workshops.
2. Continue improving our web site and expand the fact sheet database.

Any Integrated Pest Management (IPM) effort needs to stress the importance of proper, accurate pathogen identification. Control method recommendations are often very specific depending on the organism causing the plant disease. An IPM approach to managing pathogens will only be successful if proper disease diagnosis is performed prior to taking any action to correct the situation. The Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic at Cornell University has dedicated itself to providing the New York State community with plant disease diagnostic pathogen identification and education. To continue this mission and expand our audience, we have created a plan of development to improve our interaction with consumers and to increase the awareness of plant diseases among residents of our community through regional training sessions and expansion of our web based fact sheet database.

Procedures:

Improvement of disease diagnostic skills of Cooperative Extension Educators, Master Gardeners, and community members was provided by conducting regional educational workshops. To fulfill the need for regional training sessions, three sites for continued training were selected by determining, with the help of county extension educators, where the greatest need for such training exists and where the greatest impact may be obtained. The program effort focused on how to approach a plant problem and development of diagnostic skills. Through a discussion of a systematic 5 step technique, the most likely cause of a plant problem will be determined by considering the normal characteristics of a plant species or cultivar, by asking critical questions, and by observing the pattern of damage in the landscape, on an individual plant, as well as on an individual plant part.

Results:

With the help of a Community IPM grant in 1999, we were able to conduct four regional training sessions that brought diagnostic skill development to approximately 350 participants. In 2000, three training session were/will be conducted at SUNY Cobleskill, in Dutchess county, and at a yet to be determined site. These sessions are performed during the off season due to the down time available to the audience we hope to attract.

At SUNY Cobleskill, students about to enter the world of industry were the audience for a discussion of determining when a problem may have a plant pathogen involvement. These students showed enthusiasm and participated in the discussion. Faculty advisors present commented on the value of this presentation for these students. The presentation in Dutchess County will be directed at employees of garden centers that interact and are questioned by many homeowners on problems they find in their surroundings. Outcomes of these yet to be performed presentations will be forwarded to you at their completion.

The expected outcome of this project was to improve disease diagnostic skills for Cooperative Extension Educators, Master Gardeners, community and industry members. Improved diagnostic skills enables these individuals to make better decisions about the proper course of action to combat a pest problem. Our goal was to provide useful information that will allow individuals to make well-educated decisions when first determining what has caused a problem and then the best method of management of the problem. I believe this outreach program meets these goals.

Budget:

Wages:	$2300.00	
Supplies:	500.00	(photocopies, mailings, etc.)
Travel:	1200.00	
Total:	$4000.00	